

Commander thanks community for support

by Rachel Newton

A small, but attentive crowd gathered at the Pine Bluff Country Club May 11 to celebrate Armed Forces Day. The annual luncheon, hosted by the Pine Bluff Arsenal, the West Pine Bluff Rotary Club and the Pine Bluff Rotary Club, brought together community leaders, Rotary members, Arsenal military and directors, as well as active and retired military.

"What a great day and a great way to celebrate our nation's heroes," said Arsenal Sgt. Maj. Jerry Curtiss. "All of us certainly enjoy unparalleled freedoms, and we are the envy of the free world. Today, we honor those brave men and women who give so much of themselves and ask so little in return."

As he introduced Col. Brian Lindamood, Arsenal commander, as the luncheon speaker, Curtiss said that everyone could read his bio (which was printed in the luncheon program) but it was just a fraction of who he is and what he has accomplished. "He is a fourth generation Soldier who has given nearly 30 years of dedicated service in defense of our nation," he said. "If you ask him what his motivation is he will tell you it is love of God, love of his family and love of the country."

Curtiss said that Lindamood has a deep commitment to the men and women in uniform. "I have had a unique opportunity to serve this man at the beginning of our careers and now at the twilight," he said. "In the Army, we use this term – 'battle buddy' – we all have friends who are loyal to us, but a battle buddy is much more than that. You are glued together by the same values and principles. You battle buddy rallies in your achievement and stands beside you when the opposite occurs. They are steadfast and committed to you."

Lindamood began his address by saying thank you to all the people gathered at the luncheon for making Pine Bluff Arsenal the success story that it is. "No other installation in the Department of Defense enjoys the support that the Pine Bluff Arsenal enjoys, and it all starts with the states representation in Washington, D.C.," he said. "I have never in my 20-something years see a D.C. delegation serve as faithfully and diligently as they serve you. Pine Bluff Arsenal is where it is today because they have fought for us every day. To the merchants and our neighbors, every day that you think about us, or service us or assist us, you help make us successful."

Today is a day to honor our men and women in uniform, said Lindamood. "There are a lot of people behind the scenes that do not wear a uniform, but are no less a patriot," he said. "Our government civilians and contractors help us make things happen. They serve with us in inhospitable places, in the most hostile of circumstances and are just as much a part of the fight, and are as just a much part of our Army. They don't wear a uniform but they are right there with us."

The militia was here before we ever had a standing Army, he said. "It all started at a crude stone bridge in a corner of New England. You had the world's most powerful Army on one side and a bunch of vagabonds on the other," he said. "Political, social misfits and criminals of every kind, farmer, merchants, lawyers, doctors. When America was born, America's freedom was carried on the shoulders of its citizens. It's citizen Soldiers."

Now, he said we are the people on the other side of that stone bridge and we are being challenged. "We've rediscovered that we like our country," said Lindamood. "We've rediscovered that America is a good thing, and we want to keep it. The freedoms and the very things that we just recited in our pledge to our flag and our nation are being challenged."

Lindamood said that he is often asked how long the "global war on terror" will last. His response is "the short answer is it's going to last forever."

"Our opponents today have an endless supply of people, cash and a supporting cast," he said. "When the current cast of bad actors is taken care of, there will just be someone else to take their place. This is just beginning."

History tells us that democracies do not like to go to war, said Lindamood. "If we can spread just a few seed of democracy, those will be the greatest deterrent to war that we can ever put in

place,” he said. “Our single greatest weapon is not a rifle. It’s not a Soldier. It’s not a tanker, an aircraft or a spy satellite – it is our resolve.”

Referring to a Biblical passage where Paul gives encouragement to put on the “full armor of God,” Lindamood said that he personally believes that our future is going to be a function of our faith. “We must exploit our faith in God, we must exploit grace, and we must embrace grace knowing that it is given long before we ever think to ask for it.”